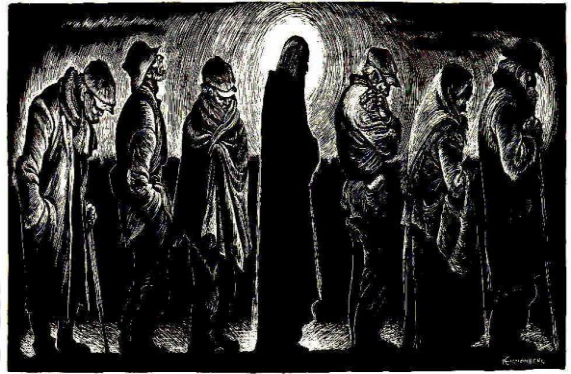


(Food for thought)

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31.



The Cry of the Poor

Today's Gospel passage, we have the classic story of the rich man and the beggar, Lazarus. We see the striking comparison between their conditions in this life and in the hereafter.

We hear the cry of Lazarus, but more importantly, we hear "the cry of the rich man", begging God to send someone to warn his brothers and the reply: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced, even if one should rise from the dead."

The Risen Lord lives on in the church, crying out in the name of the poor. It is that same Risen Lord who continues to warn us not to let our hunger for material wealth blind and deafen us to the needs of our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

To listen to the cry of the poor is a radical return to the fundamentals of our faith. It means putting on the mind of Christ. As the Psalmist says, it means "keeping faith forever, securing justice for the oppressed, giving food to the hungry, setting captives free and raising up those who are bowed down."

There are plenty of people like Lazarus in our world, crying out for the scraps from our table. And there are likewise plenty of people like the rich man - totally clueless of what is right before their eyes.

Acquiring the mind and spirit of Jesus means learning constantly how to let go, how to be willing to die to ourselves, how to rise from our own complacency. Jesus "emptied himself... took the form of a slave - humbled himself...obediently accepting even death, death on a cross."

